

## Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAB-01

IO-10 ACDA-05 CIEP-01 OMB-01 SAM-01 /078 W

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P R 221520Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2041

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

DIA

USCINCEUR

SECDEF

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2793

PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

USCINCEUR FOR ECJ 2-O

USIA FOR INA

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, SY, IS

SUBJ: DAMASCUS SITREP - NOVEMBER 22

1. SUMMARY: ONE WEEK AFTER FLAREUP OF TENSION ON GOLAN, IT STILL UNCLEAR IN DAMASCUS WHAT TOUCHED IT OFF. VARIOUS DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS REPORT THAT SYRIAN ARMY REMAINS ON ALERT. SYRIAN ARMY HELD TWO WELL PUBLICIZED EXERCISES ONE ON NOVEMBER 20 AND SECOND NOVEMBER 21. SOVIET FLEET HAS ARRIVED IN LATTAKIA AND ITS COMMANDER IS IN DAMASCUS. CITY ITSELF COMPLETELY CALM AND THERE CONTINUE BE NO INDICATIONS THAT DAMASCENES FEAR IMMINENT WAR. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING PAST WEEK EMBASSY HAS CONTINUED SEARCH FOR EXPLANATIONS OF CAUSE OF LAST WEEK'S TENSION. HUNGARIAN AMBASSADOR VERES SAYS THAT HIS CHIEF OF STAFF GENERAL OLAH (VISIT REPORTED DAMASCUS 2700) LEFT THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, AFTER FOUR DAYS OF CLOSE CONTACT WITH RANKING SYRIAN MILITARY OFFICERS. VARES, WHO IS FOUR-YEAR VETERAN OF DAMASCUS, SAYS NEITHER HE NOR OLAH SENSED ANY KIND OF TENSION. VARES CLAIMS "CRISIS" CAME SATURDAY MORNING BUT THAT HE UNCLEAR WHETHER ISRAEL OR SYRIA MOVED FIRST. IN RESPONSE TO COMMENT THAT WE HAD REPORTS OF CALL-UPS AS EARLY AS TUESDAY NOV 12 VARES SAID HIS INFORMATION WAS THAT MOBILIZATION BEGAN SATURDAY. HUNGARIAN AMBASSADOR SAID GENERAL OLAH WAS PRIMARILY IN SYRIA ON COURTESY VISIT STEMMING FROM "WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A SALES RELATIONSHIP." HE REPORTED THAT OLAH VISITED MOST FORWARD POSITIONS ON GOLAN AND WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH DEPTH AND QUALITY OF DEFENSES BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND FRONT.

3. TURKISH AMBASSADOR FENMEN SAID HIS RESIDENT MILITARY ATTACHE BELIEVES SYRIAN FORCES ARE ABOUT 60 PER CENT MOBILIZED. FENMEN ALSO AT LOSS IDENTIFY IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF FLAREUP.

4. MEANWHILE, SYRIAN RADIO, TV, AND NEWSPAPERS ALL REPORT THAT SYRIAN MILITARY UNITS HELD TWO MANEUVERS IN PAST TWO DAYS. THEY REPORT THAT ON NOVEMBER 20 "ARMORED FORMATIONS" USING "VARIOUS TYPES" OF WEAPONS EXERCISED UNDER BATTLE CONDITIONS UNDER PERSONAL DIRECTION OF DEFENSE MINISTER TLAS. UNITS, AGAIN DESCRIBED AS ARMORED FORMATIONS, REPORTEDLY CONFIDENTIAL

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CARRIED OUT "TACTICAL EXERCISES" WITH LIVE AMMUNITION ON NOVEMBER 21. PAPERS SAY MANEUVERS WERE HELD AT DIRECTION OF PRESIDENT ASAD, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, "TO PREPARE FORCES TO ENTER LIBERATION BATTLE."

5. AS REPORTED EARLIER, SHIPS FROM SOVIET BLACK SEA FLEET HAVE ARRIVED AT LATTAKIA. FLEET COMMANDER LT. GENERAL NICOLAI KHOSEIN CALLED ON GENERAL TLAS EVENING OF NOVEMBER 21

IN DAMASCUS.

6. MOOD IN DAMASCUS CONTINUES TO BE "BUSINESS-AS-USUAL."  
THERE STILL NO INDICATION THAT DAMASCENES FEAR IMMINENT OUT-  
BREAK OF WAR.

7. COMMENT: INFORMATION WE HAVE ON EVENTS OF PAST WEEK CON-  
TINUES TO BE FRAGMENTARY. WE AGREE WITH TURKISH AMBASSADOR  
THAT SUM TOTAL OF PIECES AT THIS POINT IN TIME LEAVES  
FUZZY PICTURE OF EVENTS.

REGARDING REPORTS OF MILITARY MANEUVERS, SYRIAN ARMY DOES  
NOT AS RULE PUBLICIZE SUCH EXERCISES. SUCH PUBLICITY IS,  
IN OUR OPINION, CALCULATED TO REASSURE SYRIANS AND WARN  
ISRAELIS THAT ARMY IS PREPARED TO TAKE MILITARY ACTION.  
RE SOVIET FLEET VISIT, THERE TALK IN TOWN THAT SARG URGED  
VISIT ON SOVIET UNION BECAUSE IT FEARED, AFTER RABIN'S  
REMARKS ON NUMBER OF SOVIET SHIPS IN HARBOR, ISRAELIS  
PLANNED ATTACK PORT.  
MURPHY

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MOBILIZATION, ARMED FORCES, DAMASCUS SITREP, PUBLIC ATTITUDES  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** KelleyW0  
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**Review Content Flags:**  
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**Review Event:**  
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**TAGS:** MOPS, SY, IS  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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